

Solar Messaging

In North Carolina and the nation, we are in a transition in the way we generate electricity that powers our economy. In the past, we've relied on fuels that, while less expensive, we've learned were not great for our environment.

So now, in this transition to a low carbon/no carbon future, we want to be purposeful. House Bill 589, which was ratified by the General Assembly last year, set out a pathway for development of renewable energy in North Carolina well into the future.

But as often happens with legislation that is passed in the closing hours of the legislative session, the implementation of the renewables pathway was cluttered with some missing pieces. The central question was the status of solar projects that were lined up to be connected to the electric grid prior to the signing of HB 589

The solar industry and Duke Energy had negotiated on HB 589 for a year and frankly, they were weary of the give-and-take. So in November, I strongly suggested that they go back to the negotiating table to work through the implementation of the renewables legislation. They did, and as a result, the solar industry will be able to move forward on the development of hundreds of megawatts of solar energy right away.

Solar projects that had been sidetracked will now be put back on the schedule for implementation.

At the same time, our secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality has issued the Atlantic Coast Pipeline a permit that will allow construction of a natural gas transmission line that will travel through eight counties in eastern North Carolina.

The department has been thorough and relentless in asking the right questions, demanding more information and examining the environmental implications of the pipeline.

We believe that if the Atlantic Coast Pipeline adheres to the permit that DEQ has issued, the environmental impacts will be minimal. At the same time, the availability of more natural gas in eastern North Carolina can be an important asset for economic development.

In assessing our near-term energy future, we xxxx engaged the ACP to create a fund that would[transition to ACP narrative]